

COMMISSION ACTION

NCPC File Nos. 0349/3083



**WOODROW WILSON BRIDGE REPLACEMENT
POTOMAC RIVER WATERFRONT COMMUNITY PARK
Prince George's County, Maryland**

Submission by the Federal Highway Administration

August 5, 2004

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of preliminary and final site development plans pursuant to Section 5 of the National Capital Planning Act (40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1)).

Commission Action

The Commission **approves** the preliminary and final site development plans for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Potomac River Waterfront Community Park, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 2510(05.17)-41411.

Deborah B. Young
Secretary to the National Capital Planning Commission

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

NCPC File No. 0349/3083



WOODROW WILSON BRIDGE REPLACEMENT POTOMAC RIVER WATERFRONT COMMUNITY PARK Prince Georges County, Maryland

Submitted by the Federal Highway Administration

July 29, 2004

Abstract

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has requested that the Commission review the preliminary and final site development plans for a new river shoreline park, at the east end of the Woodrow Wilson Replacement Bridge, which completes and complements the final bridge design plans previously approved by the Commission. The review and approval of preliminary and final site development plans for the park will enable the FHWA to proceed with work to construct this element of the replacement bridge. The current schedule calls for the outer loop of the new bridge to be completed by mid-year 2006. Final design of the park affects only the Maryland abutment of the bridge. The park design, as proposed, will be constructed by the Maryland State Highway Administration and will become a feature destination within the Prince George's County/Maryland National Capitol Park and Planning park system.

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of preliminary and final site development plans pursuant to Section 5 of the National Capital Planning Act (40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1)).

Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

Approves the preliminary and final site development plans for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Potomac River Waterfront Community Park, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 2510(05.17)-41411.

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PROJECT SUMMARY

Site Description

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has submitted preliminary and final site development plans for the construction of a park at the east side of the Woodrow Wilson Replacement Bridge (Wilson Bridge) at the Maryland shoreline. The proposed park site is wholly located within the existing shore area known as Rosalie Island, in Prince George's County, and consists of approximately 4 acres. The land area is generally two to twenty-five feet above the normal river water level and is bisected by both the current and new bridge alignment.

The land exhibits important shoreline vegetation and its north extent is populated by various bird species, including bald eagles and hawks that use the north end of Rosalie Island as perching habitat when fishing the Potomac waters. A bald eagle's nest is situated at the south side of Rosalie Island. All eagle activities, both to the north and south sides of Rosalie Island will continue to be observed and protected by FHWA, the Maryland State Highway Administration, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service during project development.

Background

The Commission has reviewed the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Replacement project at several stages. These actions included the following reviews at the date specified.

April 8, 1999: The Commission approved design concepts for the replacement Woodrow Wilson Bridge project.

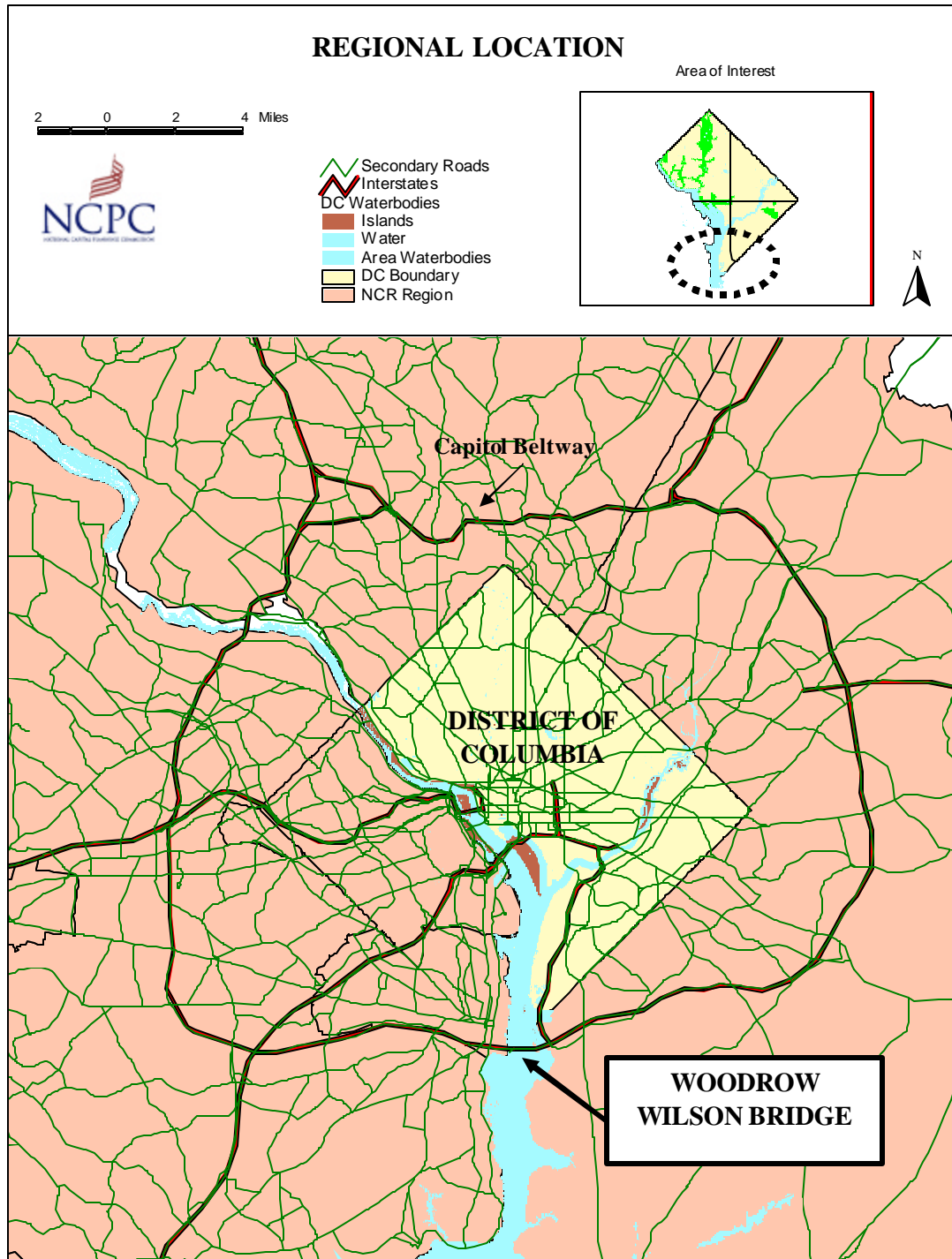
August 3, 2000: The Commission approved preliminary site and building plans and final foundation and Phase I dredging plans for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Replacement.

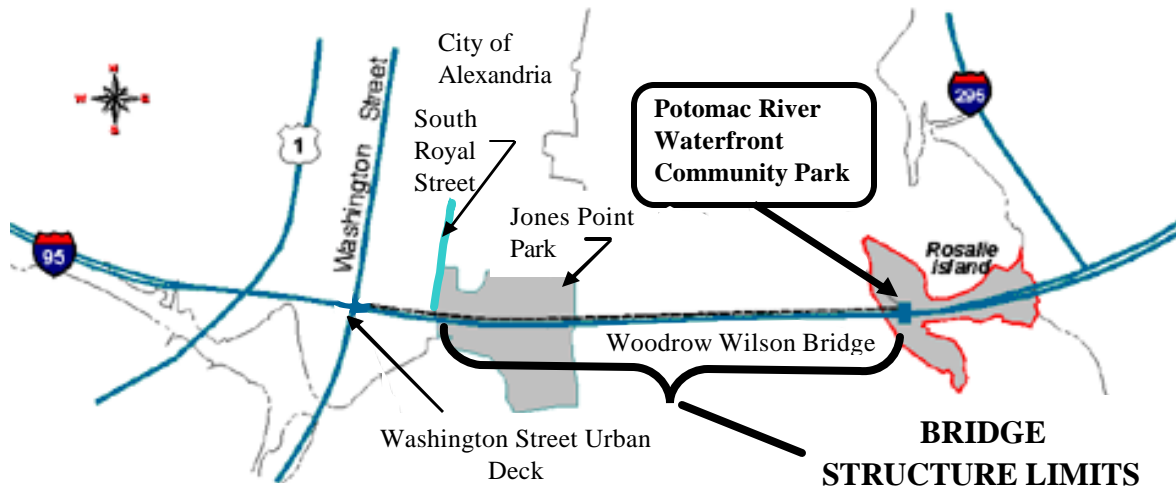
March 1, 2001: The Commission approved preliminary site and building plans for the urban deck overpass at Washington Street; improvements to Jones Point Park in Alexandria, VA; and development of the new Potomac River Waterfront Community Park at Rosalie Island in Prince George's County, Maryland. Elements excepted from this approval were the gateway sentinel elements at Potomac River Waterfront Community Park, which were understood to have been deleted from the project; and the restroom/maintenance buildings at Jones Point Park and Potomac River Waterfront Community Park, which were approved in concept only.

August 2, 2001: The Commission approved final building plans for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Replacement.

November 1, 2001: The Commission approved revised preliminary and final site and building plans for the urban deck overpass at Washington Street in Alexandria, Virginia.

April 4, 2002: The Commission approved the preliminary and final site development plans for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Memorial Medallions, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 3206.00(38.00)-41000.





GENERAL PLAN OF WOODROW WILSON BRIDGE AND ASSOCIATED PROJECT ELEMENTS

April 3, 2003: The Commission approved the preliminary and final site development plans for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge noise barrier, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 2510(05.17)-41155, and requested that the FHWA, in the preparation of subsequent plan submissions for ancillary elements of the replacement bridge project, provide information on the design of Jones Point Park and Potomac River Waterfront Community Park, including structures, visual graphics and signage to be utilized at both locations.

As previously approved by the Commission, all signs and railings on the bridge are a consistent height. The result is a coherent horizontal and vertical vocabulary of support structures, with predominant curved edges appearing at the profile end. The proposed park continues to feature themes of this vocabulary using:

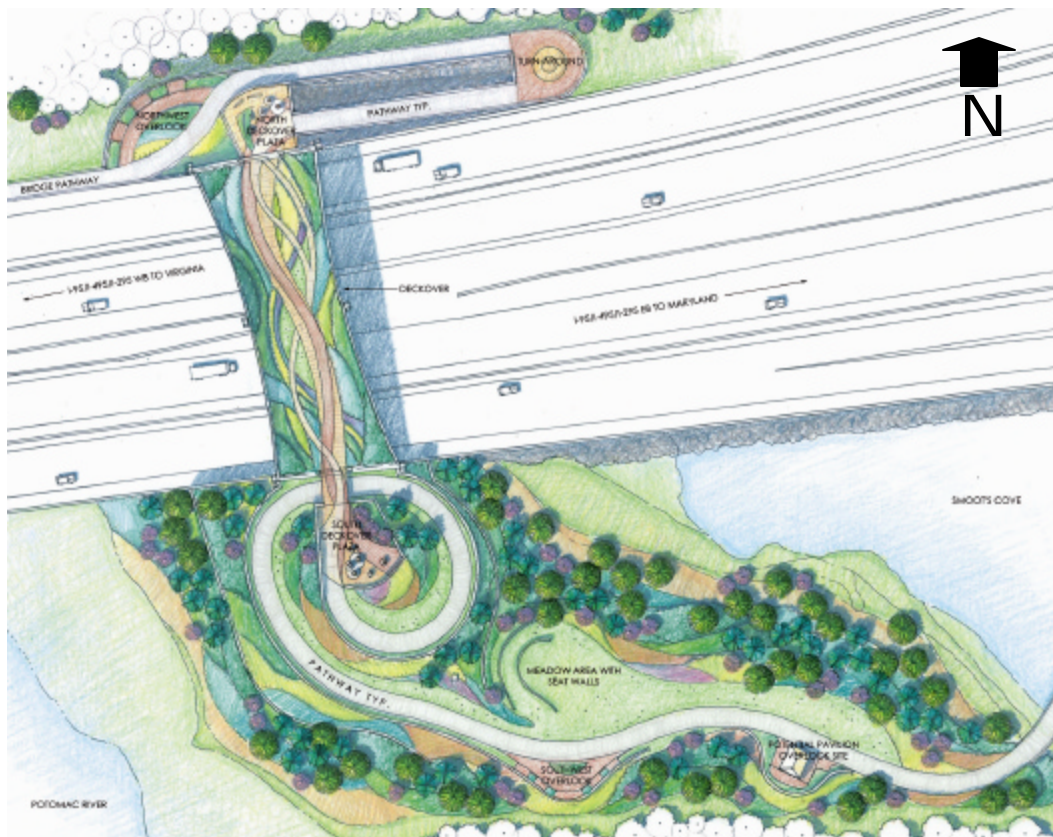
- A consistent height of railing and material colors
- Symmetrical curving geometry to provide uniformity and narrow profiles
- Stone exterior surface treatments as a main project theme material

Proposal

The final park site development plan consists of:

- Several pedestrian overlooks that are proposed along a pedestrian and bicycling trail, which connects the bridge abutment area, for a distance of one mile, to the main shoreline in Maryland.
- A pedestrian overpass bridge structure that carries the pedestrian/bicycle trail over the inner and outer traffic lanes of the capitol beltway at the Potomac River Waterfront Community Park.
- Additional landfill to elevate the park features and trail to the level of the necessary overpass.
- All final detailing of the pedestrian overpass, trail design, exterior lighting, retaining walls, trail bridge structure, interpretative information features for both the park and the Wilson Bridge, grading, shoreline protection, and landscaping of the park as it appears adjacent to the Wilson Bridge.

The pedestrian overpass bridge, or Deckover, is a 23,000 square foot landscaped pedestrian bridge that will carry the pedestrian/bicycle trail across I-95/495 and continue over the Potomac River on the north side of the new Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge.



**POTOMAC WATERFRONT COMMUNITY PARK FINAL SITE PLAN AT EAST END
OF THE WOODROW WILSON REPLACEMENT BRIDGE**

A one-mile segment of this path begins east of the Deckover and then extends through the park to connect the trail systems in Maryland with those in Virginia. Special features in the park include stone-like veneers on piers and retaining walls, custom metal railings, special paving, sculptural seat boulders, interpretive signage, benches, pedestrian scale lighting, an amphitheater, and a pavilion site.

According to the Replacement Bridge project scheduling, construction of the new bridge continues to occur in stages, with the most recent being the work for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge (outer loop) superstructure that started in late 2003. This activity is underway, along with the approach ramps toward the bridge in Virginia and demolition within the acquired right-of-way. Also underway are the east approach ramps and interchanges in Maryland near Interstate 295.

The currently submitted plans are a portion of the next bid package to follow. FHWA's submission involves the preliminary and final plans for the Potomac River Waterfront Community Park located next to the east end of the bridge. By late fall of 2004, the FHWA expects to award contracts related to construction at this location.



ELEVATION VIEW OF DECKOVER FINAL DESIGN WITH EAST OVERLOOK AND SOUTH OVERLOOK AS VIEWED FROM THE CAPITOL BELTWAY WHEN LEAVING MARYLAND TO CROSS THE WOODROW WILSON BRIDGE

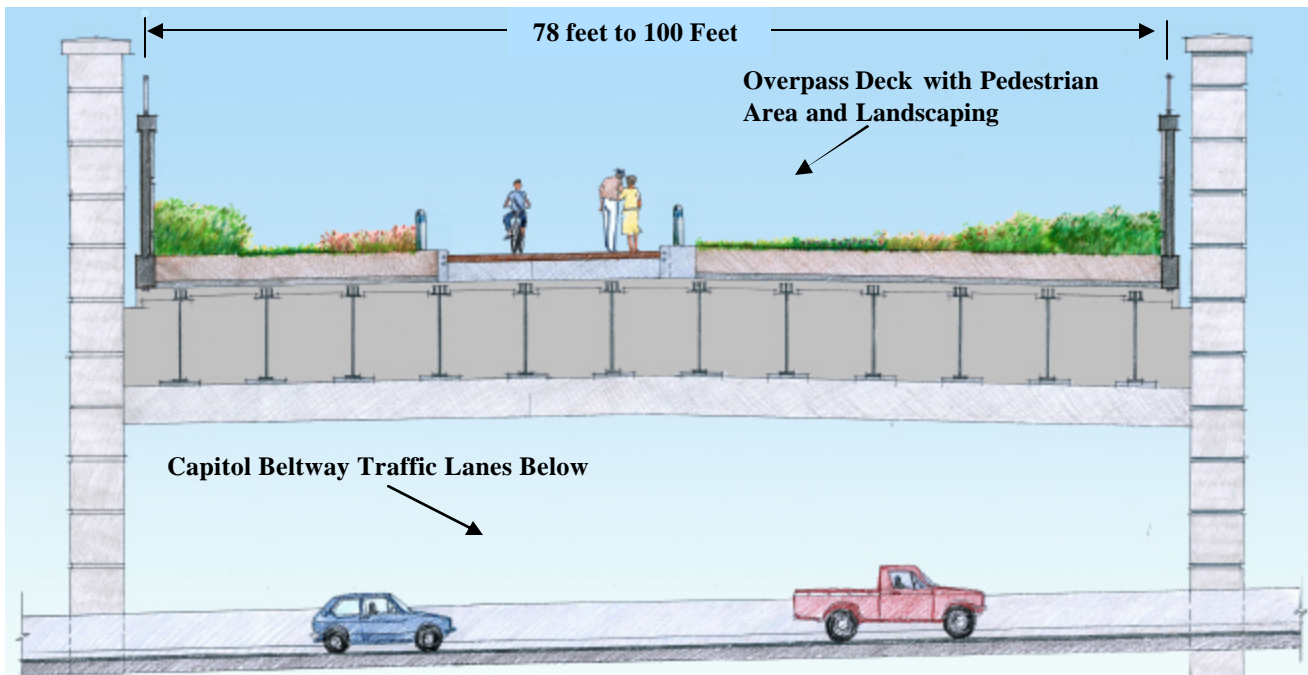
Development Program

Applicant: Federal Highway Administration

Architect: Mahan Rykiel & Associates, Landscape Architects, Baltimore, MD; Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson, Engineers; and Whiteman, Requardt and Assoc., LLP Baltimore, MD.

Cost: \$15 million to \$20 million

Schedule: Construction is anticipated to begin in 2005 and a completion of the project is estimated for late 2006.



SECTION VIEW OF DECKOVER WITH PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY AND BICYCLE PATH

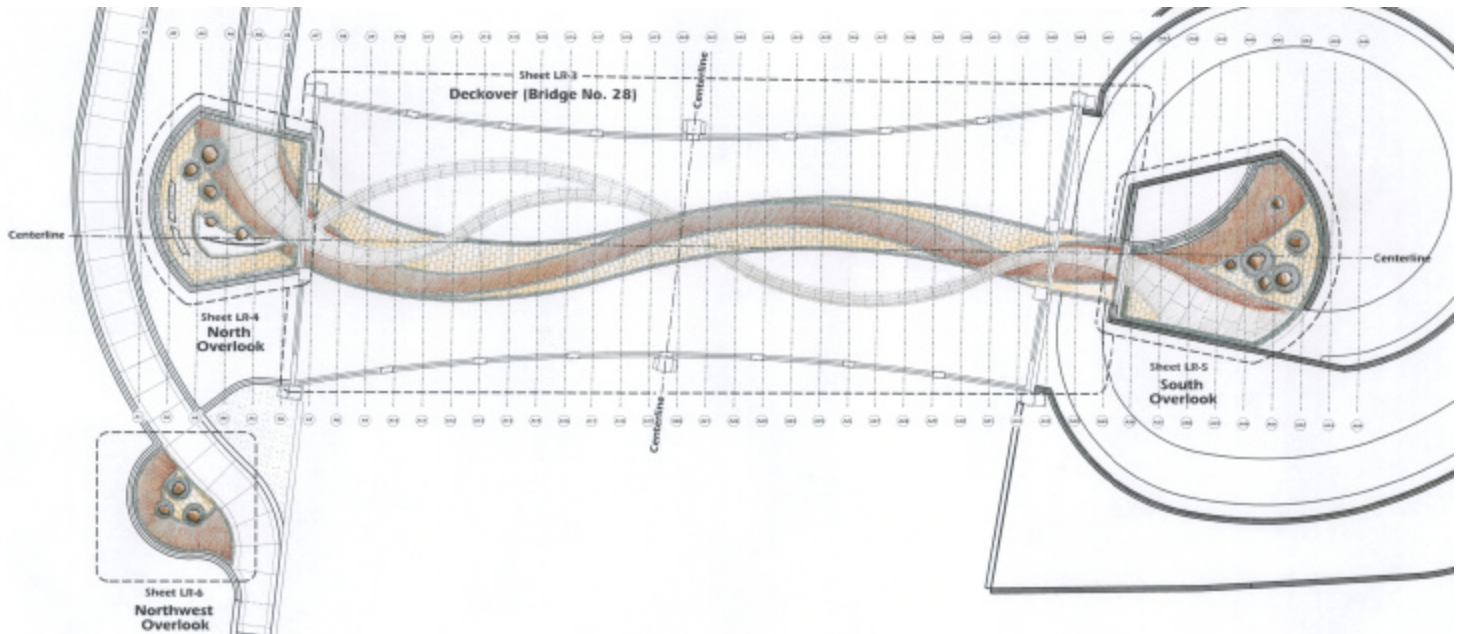
PROJECT ANALYSIS

Executive Summary

Staff **recommends approval** of the preliminary and final site development plans for the Potomac River Waterfront Community Park. The submission addresses all the Commission's earlier concerns regarding the park's concept design in March 2001, including the removal of the gateway pylons and the continuation of the high level of construction finishes noted in April 2003.

Moreover, the FHWA's efforts have resulted in a coordinated physical feature that merges the landside touchdown of the Wilson Bridge with the park in a very seamless fashion. The plan's

delineated material finishes are of the highest quality and the architectural detailing contributes to the monumental character of the bridge abutment area and the splendid vantage points afforded by the new park design. The interpretative signage and information defines both the bridge and park extremely well. The winding, accessible paths allow pedestrians and bicyclists to experience a dramatic sequence of spaces through the park and up over the beltway vehicle traffic. The design successfully balances the bridge's monumental aspirations by incorporating features of the bridge (color and material) into the vocabulary of the park. Additionally, the Deckover's vertical proportion is highlighted by its clean geometry but does not compete with the Wilson Bridge itself. The staff further commends the FHWA for the well executed park landscape planting design, the preservation of the wildlife habitat existing at the north extent of Rosalie Island, and the conservation of aquatic habitat within Smoot's Cove and Fox Ferry Cove at the Potomac River east shore.



PARK OVERLOOK WALK WAY DESIGNS AT NORTH AND SOUTH ENDS OF DECKOVER AND AT NORTHWEST OVERLOOK AT BRIDGE ABUTMENT

PROJECT CONFORMANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

The proposed location of the new park on the Potomac shoreline is consistent with the goals of the Plan and its development adheres to preservation objectives. A policy contained in the Parks, Open Space and Natural Features Element applies to shoreline protection and states:

- Natural shoreline areas in the National Capital Open Space System should be retained in their natural condition, minimally impacted, or be appropriately landscaped for a distance of 150 to 200 feet from the water's edge, if possible.

Additional policies pertaining to the project and the protection and enhancement of Gateways also apply:

- Visitors and residents within the Region who enter the Nation's Capital by ground transportation should have the sensation of entering a special place. The major approaches should be dramatic in appearance, but pleasant and functional, with a strong sense of arrival. Gateway corridors (both land and water), and terminals should be protected from unattractive development and designed and maintained in a manner consistent with their special role.
- New bridge structures should be designed to retain the natural continuity of waterways, shorelines, and valleys. Wherever possible, bridges and their approaches should enhance the sense of arrival (gateway) or transitional qualities inherent in river crossings.

All aspects of the preliminary and final site development plans for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Potomac River Waterfront Community Park demonstrate consistency with the above policies of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital.



**WEST ELEVATION VIEW OF DECKOVER FINAL DESIGN AS SEEN FROM
WILSON BRIDGE ABUTMENT LOOKING EAST INTO MARYLAND**

National Historic Preservation Act

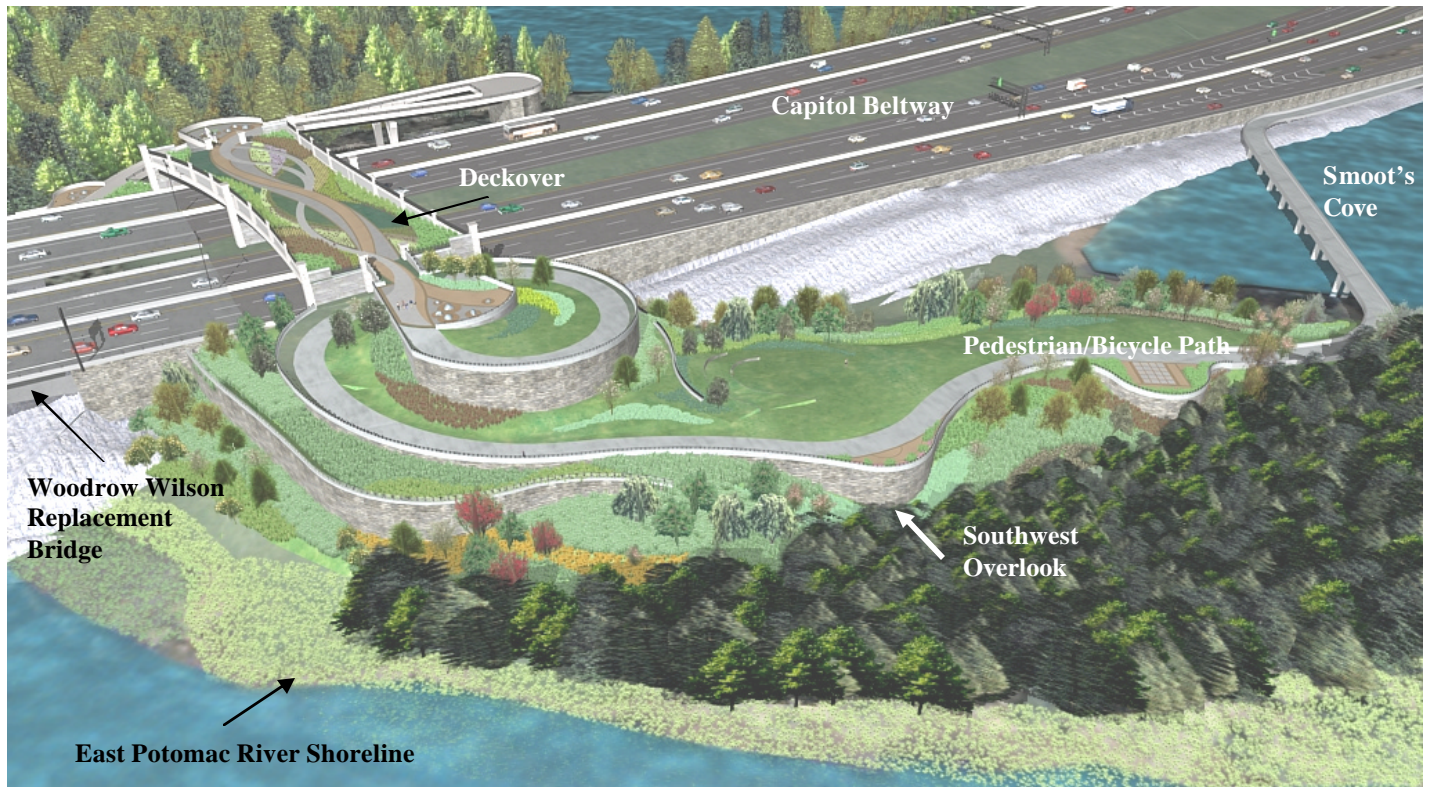
A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the proposed Woodrow Wilson Bridge Replacement was signed in October and November of 1997. The signatories were FHWA (the lead agency), NPS, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the State Historic Preservation Offices for Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. The signatories and other parties are continuing to consult on specific aspects of the project as they are developed. The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) in Prince George's County has participated directly with FHWA in the review of the project, including those aspects pursuant to the MOA.

National Environmental Policy Act

Pursuant to the regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the FHWA prepared a Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) and Record of Decision for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge project. These documents were prepared in April and June 2000, respectively.

On June 16, 2000, NCPC issued its own FEIS that adopted the FHWA FSEIS relating to NCPC's authority for review and approval of the bridge project. The FEIS was available to the public for review more than thirty days before Commission action.

The submitted preliminary and final park plans are in conformance with all decisions arrived at and documented in the NEPA process.



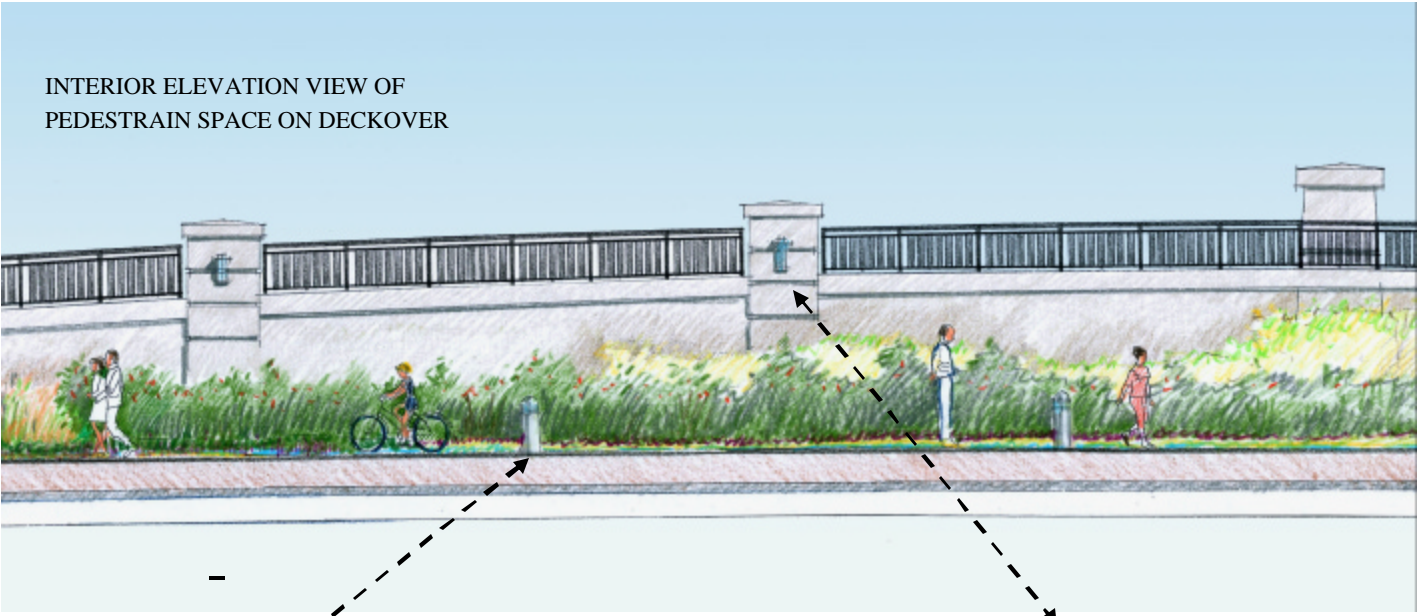
VIEW OF PARK AND DECKOVER FROM SOUTH WITH PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE PATH ACROSS SMOOT'S COVE AT RIGHT

Federal Capital Improvements Program

The Woodrow Wilson Bridge Replacement project is included in the Federal Capital Improvements Program Fiscal Years 2002 – 2007, adopted by the Commission on July 3, 2001. The total project cost in the currently identified program is \$2 billion.

COORDINATION

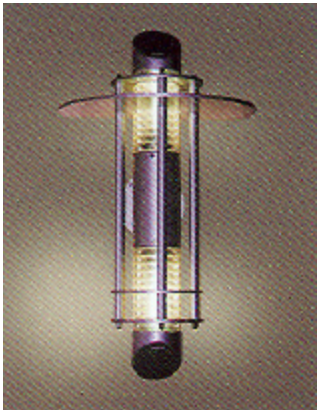
FHWA and its consultants have coordinated the submitted final site development plans for the park with local jurisdictional governments and state agencies. The FHWA continued its coordination efforts with the various stakeholder advisory subcommittees, which provided valued input into the park location and design process. Additionally, in early April 2004 FHWA and their consultants met with NCPC staff to review information on the design being considered.

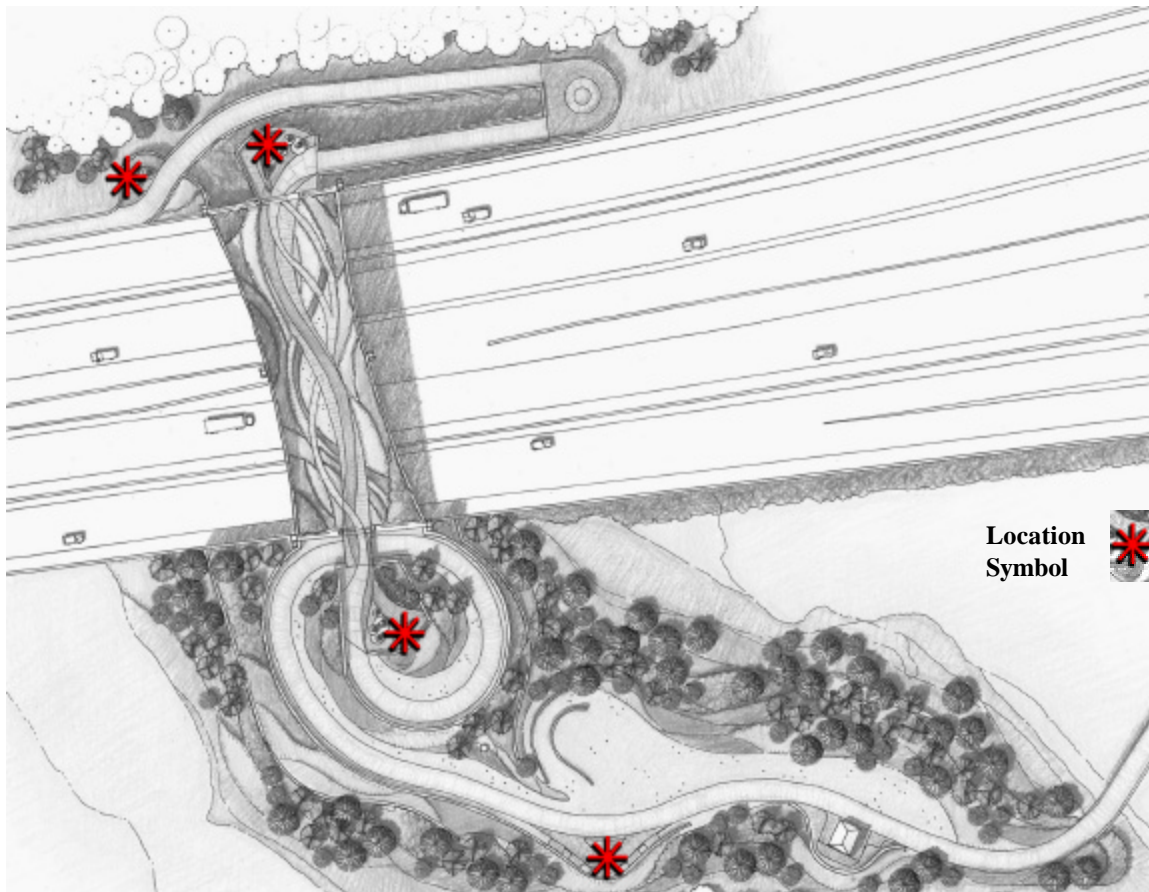


**PEDESTRIAN LIGHT FIXTURES AT
DECKOVER AND IN THE PARK**

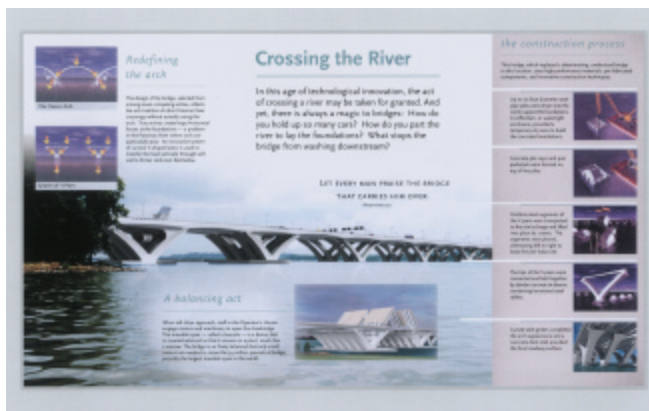


PARK PATHWAY
LIGHTING
STANDARD →

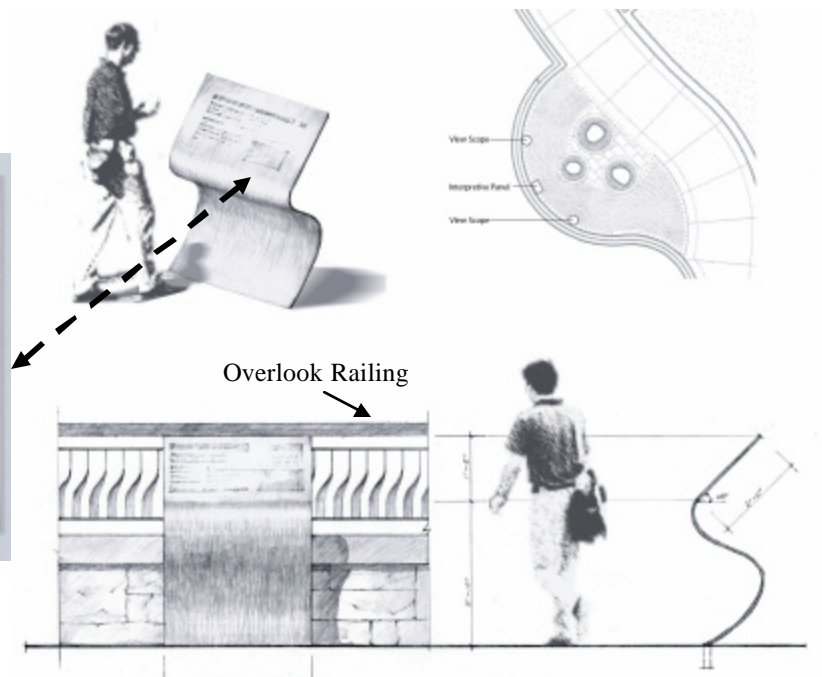




INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE LOCATIONS



TYPICAL INTERPRETIVE GRAPHIC AND TEXT



INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE FORM